

New Egypt minister warns militants

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's new interior minister, General Hassan Al Alfi, pledged Monday to launch a "decisive" confrontation to end unrest in an implicit warning to Muslim militants. The ruling party daily May, meanwhile, said his predecessor General Abdul Halim Musa was sacked because he failed to consult President Hosni Mubarak before accepting a mediation bid between the government and militants (see page 2). Gen. Alfi urged the Egyptian people to collaborate with police to confront "elements... who try to disrupt public order," according to a press statement. "There will be a decisive confrontation against any attempt to violate the law," the general said in his first official remarks since Mr. Mubarak named him Sunday to replace Gen. Musa. Gen. Alfi did not refer by name to the Muslim militants who have waged a year-long battle to destabilise the government that has killed some 140 people, including tourists and Coptic Christians. Gen. Musa adopted a hard line against the militants but last week disclosed a mediation bid by Islamic intellectuals. "His sacking was the result of several errors," said May. "The last to date was the contacts he undertook on his own... (with the intellectuals) without consulting President Mubarak or Prime Minister Atef Sedki." The prime minister on Sunday, shortly after the announcement of Gen. Musa's dismissal, rejected dialogue with the militants.

Rockets fired at Israeli 'security zone'

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — Resistance fighters fired at least two Katyusha rockets on Israel's self-styled "security zone" in South Lebanon overnight, security sources said Monday. There was no immediate report of casualties. Security sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the Soviet-designed rockets were fired from Wadi Nafkha near the village of Yater, a stronghold of the Hizbollah group. Yater is 18 kilometres southeast of the southern port city of Tyre. The Katyushas were launched near the site where a senior commander of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine was seriously wounded Friday in an Israeli helicopter attack on his motorcade.

Iraq starts building drive in Sudan

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq, labouring under a punitive U.N. trade embargo, said Monday its engineers and technicians were repairing equipment and helping build roads and bridges in Sudan. "An engineering and technical delegation left Baghdad for Khartoum several days ago to help their Sudanese brethren in the campaign of maintenance and reconstruction," the government newspaper Al Jumhuriyah said. Iraq's minister of housing and construction, Mahmoud Di'ab Al Ahmad, left for Sudan on Sunday for an official visit. "Engineering and technical teams from the ministry were in Sudan recently where they embarked on a comprehensive campaign... to repair a great quantity of machines and equipment," Al Jumhuriyah quoted Mr. Ahmad as saying before leaving.

Israeli missile official convicted of taking bribery

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The former head of Israel's Heretz anti-missile project, Dov Raviv, has been found guilty of pocketing bribes, court officials said Monday. Judge Amnon Strachnov of Tel Aviv district court found Sunday that Mr. Raviv took \$175,000 in bribes from a Canadian company and laundered the money through a Swiss bank account. Sentencing is to follow at a later date. Mr. Raviv, 56, was sacked in January 1992 as head of the project to build the Heretz anti-missile missile, financed 80 per cent by the United States. He is considered a top military expert and worked for 15 years on sophisticated Israeli arms projects.

Palestinian on trial for disco bombing

BERLIN (AFP) — The trial opened here Monday of a Palestinian suspected of a link with the April 1986 attack on the West Berlin discotheque, La Belle, that triggered the U.S. bombing raid on Libya nine days later. The 37-year-old man, Imad Mahmoud, was charged with abetting a Palestinian commando unit that was allegedly inspired and equipped by Libya to carry out an attack on U.S. soldiers in West Berlin. Mr. Mahmoud listened quietly as the charges were read out, and then said only: "I am innocent."

Mechanical failure behind Afghan crash

MAZAR-E-SHARIF, Afghanistan (AP) — Mechanical failure was the probable cause of a helicopter crash that killed two U.S. journalists and 13 Afghans, according to rescue workers who retrieved the bodies. The bodies of Sharon Herbaugh, 39, the Pakistan bureau chief of the Associated Press, and of freelance journalist Natasha Singh, 28, were flown to Islamabad Sunday on a U.N. flight from their northern Afghan border town. The crash was Friday.

8 'terrorists' killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian security forces killed eight armed Islamic activists and seized four automatic weapons in separate incidents overnight and on Sunday, police said Monday. Two of the alleged fundamentalist "terrorists" were killed and one was injured when police chased four men preparing to carry out a holdup in the east Algiers suburb of Hussein-Dey Sunday. The fourth man escaped.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز يومية سياسية - جوردان تيمز يومية سياسية - جوردان تيمز يومية سياسية

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ROYAL JORDANIAN

YOUR WINDOW ON THE WORLD.

Volume 17 Number 5287

AMMAN TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 1993, SHAWAL 28, 1413

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Peace talks said set for April 27

Arafat, Assad hold talks in Latakia; ministers meet formally in Damascus

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria and the United States have proposed restarting the Middle East peace negotiations on April 27, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said Monday before meeting Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

"Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher agreed on this date," Mr. Arafat was quoted as saying by journalists on the plane from Cairo to Latakia, Syria.

Washington and Moscow, the sponsors of the peace talks, invited the Arabs and Israelis to resume the stalled negotiations in Washington Tuesday, but the Palestinians said conditions for the talks had not been met.

"I hope that the obstacles will be removed by then and that there will be no other delay," Mr. Arafat was quoted as saying. Mr. Arafat said that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Palestinian delegates to the peace talks were to meet in Amman later Monday to formulate a position on the negotiations. This position was then to be

communicated to the meeting in Damascus of the other Arab parties to the talks — Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. The meeting is to decide on Arab conditions for resuming the peace talks.

Mr. Sharaa, who was in the same plane with Mr. Arafat, refused to mention a date for the resumption of the talks. Journalists travelling with him quoted him as saying that the Damascus meeting would announce "a common Arab position and nothing will be revealed before then."

Mr. Arafat said he was going to examine "in detail" with President Assad all obstacles blocking the peace process.

Arab delegates said the Arafat-Assad meeting, the first in a year, took place in Qardahah, Mr. Assad's hometown which is near Latakia on the Mediterranean coast.

At the meeting were members of the Palestinian negotiating team Faisal Hussein, Saeb Erakat and Hanan Ashrawi as well as PLO Political Department head Farouk Kaddoumi and two other PLO Executive Committee members.

Mr. Assad was accompanied by Vice president Abdul Halim Khaddam, Mr. Sharaa and the minister of state for foreign affairs, Nasser Kaddur, according to Arab delegates.

Journalists asked Mr. Sharaa about U.S. assurances about the terms of the peace talks, and reportedly replied: "Contacts are continuing on this subject."

Mr. Arafat said the Palestinians wanted to delay the talks because Israel had not resolved the crisis over its expulsion of Palestinians to Lebanon in December as well as those expelled previously.

They were also angry over the closure of the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank last month, which he reportedly described as a "second occupation."

Foreign ministers Fares Bue of Lebanon and Kamel Abu Jaber of Jordan who were also on the plane with Mr. Arafat and Mr. Sharaa.

The meeting between Mr. Assad and Mr. Arafat suggested that a month of intense bargaining over whether to attend the

(Continued on page 5)

Saudis to free PLO funds in Gulf

CAIRO (R) — Saudi Arabia has offered to boost financial support for the Palestinians to reduce the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) isolation and encourage it to resume peace talks, diplomats and Palestinian delegates said Monday.

The delegates said Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal had called on other Gulf states to release PLO money blocked since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

They said Prince Saud was to meet Faisal Al Hussein, the Palestinian negotiators' chief coordinator, in Cairo Monday.

Prince Saud told an Arab League meeting Sunday he would discuss the financial strains of Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories and the prospects for a resumption of peace talks, the sources said.

After the PLO expressed support for Iraq, Gulf countries froze financial aid and halted a five per-cent tax deducted from Palestinian workers in the Gulf and channelled to the PLO.

Cairo-based political analysts said the gesture from the kingdom, a main ally of the United

States, was aimed at easing the PLO's isolation and encouraging Palestinians to go to the talks.

Palestinians believe an improvement in the PLO's finances would help stem rising support in the occupied territories for the hardline Hamas movement, which opposes the peace process.

The diplomatic and Palestinian sources said Prince Saud also announced his Gulf oil rich country would increase financial support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which cares for hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA said in a report to Arab delegates that lack of funds had made it impossible for the agency to keep up its educational, social, and health services to the Palestinians (see page 2).

The end of Gulf funding has caused a crisis in some Palestinian institutions. PLO sources said university teachers in the occupied territories had not been paid for three months, hospitals in Nablus and Gaza were suffering and thousands of students had been deprived of scholarships.

Iraq: U.S. ignored efforts to better ties

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said Monday the U.S. administration of President Bill Clinton had ignored its efforts to improve relations and Baghdad did not remain silent in the face of repeated attacks.

"It seems the new American administration does not want to use its mind (to review) its overall aggressive attitude and conduct towards Iraq," the Baath Party daily Al Thawra said.

"This new American aggression will only make us more determined to remain steadfast, clinging to our right and rage with anger at the wicked scoundrels (U.S. and allies) on whom God's wrath is bound to fall," Al Thawra said.

Vice-President Tareq Aziz told the official Iraqi News Agency that the American attack was unjustified and could be described only as "hostile and arrogant."

He warned the Clinton administration that steps by the former Bush administration against Iraq "turned out to be a complete failure (because) Iraq remains steadfast to its rights and shall not be terrorised by such attempts."

Two U.S. planes patrolling the northern "no-fly" zone fired a missile at an anti-aircraft missile battery Sunday.

Iraq said three soldiers were wounded and called the attack "provocative, hostile behaviour."

The U.S. European command's headquarters in Germany said the planes retaliated after radar locked on to them.

The government newspaper Al Jumhuriyah said "professional criminals and murderers in the Pentagon" had sent the planes.

Nine days earlier, four U.S. planes patrolling the zone dropped cluster bombs on an Iraqi anti-aircraft position close to Mosul, which is 400 kilometres north of Baghdad.

Hoping for better ties with the new U.S. administration, Iraq offered Mr. Clinton a unilateral ceasefire on Jan. 19 and said it would stop flying planes in the southern and northern "no-fly" zones.

Al Thawra said Iraq had hoped for "a new chapter of dealing (with Washington) that would have reflected positively on the conditions in the whole region."

Al Qadisiyah, the Defence Ministry newspaper, said that the latest air attack showed Washington "rejects all the moral rules calling for peace through dialogue and on the basis of mutual interests."

In Washington, the Defence

(Continued on page 5)

Hoar ends Jordan visit

AMMAN (J.T.) — General Joseph Hoar, commander of the U.S. Central Command, left Amman Monday at the end of a several-day visit during which he was received by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Abdul Hafez Mirai and other senior officials.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the Regent met with Gen. Hoar and a delegation accompanying him Monday (see photo) and discussed Jordanian-American relations and cooperation in all fields.

The Regent reviewed the latest developments in the Arab and international scenes and answered queries raised by members of the



'Poverty report is not frightening'

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A committee which was entrusted late February to prepare a report on poverty in Jordan has accomplished its task and will present its findings to the prime minister in the next few days.

According to a high-ranking official, the report is now in the hands of the minister of planning who is drawing key notes from the report and trying to include it in an overall comprehensive review to the presented to international donor countries' institutions in May-June this year.

The poverty report was demanded by the World Bank, which had done its own report on the subject, to see how the Jordanian government views the social impact on the people in the process of implementing the economic structural adjustment programme.

The report is also intended as a comparison document and a measurement of accuracy to the World Bank report, the official told the Jordan Times.

The official, who preferred anonymity, refused to reveal any data or information except to say that the report "is not frightening" and that its main scope "is mainly in linking poverty to unemployment" which the government sees as a key danger to avoid poverty from widening.

He hinted that by highlighting the threat of unemployment rather than poverty, Jordan hopes to convince the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of the social danger of cutting the civil

(Continued on page 5)

Israeli army blocks aid for besieged Gaza Strip

EREZ CHECKPOINT, Occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers stopped a convoy of aid Monday and confiscated food, clothing and blankets meant for Palestinians confined to the occupied Gaza Strip for three weeks.

Military authorities blocked the five-truck convoy from entering the strip, calling the effort by the leftist Hadash party and Arab Israelis "a political act."

An army spokesman said the military would give the clothes and blankets to Gazans in need but would return the food, which included flour, rice and sugar, to the convoy's organisers.

"No-one is going hungry in Gaza, there is abundant food, and the members of parliament know this," the spokesman said.

Israel's cabinet decided Sunday to extend the closure which had prevented tens of thousands of

Palestinians of the strip and occupied West Bank from working in the Jewish state.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ordered the occupied territories closed after attacks in which 13 Israelis were killed last month.

Two Hadash members of parliament who accompanied the convoy called the closure an Israeli attempt to force Palestinians back to Middle East peace talks suspended since Israel's expulsion of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon in December.

"The closing of Gaza is a crime, and one of its goals is to make the Palestinian people suffer from hunger," parliament deputy Hashem Mahameed told a meeting of Gaza businessmen.

Israel's Peace Now Movement, which advocated an Israeli military withdrawal from the occupied territories, Monday voiced support for the indefinite closure of

the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"It is an intelligent and positive measure because the closure of the territories shows the Israelis that separatism is the most realistic solution," Peace Now spokesman Tsali Reshef told a press conference.

"Mixing the Israeli and Palestinian people is being paid with blood," Mr. Reshef said in reference to the killings of 15 Israelis and 26 Palestinians last month.

Gaza was sealed off on March 28 and the West Bank was closed two days later.

Peace Now said Israel should take a "brave peace initiative" to kickstart stalled Arab-Israeli peace talks to "give hope to inhabitants of the region."

"The government must start a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)," said Peace Now Secretary General Avri Gil.

Bitter feud in Pakistan after Sharif is toppled

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will be arrested if corruption charges are confirmed, the acting premier said Monday, indicating the country's power struggle could escalate.

Mr. Sharif's government was dismissed Sunday night by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, capping a two-month battle for supremacy between Pakistan's two most powerful men. Mr. Sharif began rallying loyalists Monday to challenge his dismissal.

Mr. Ishaq Khan deposed Mr. Sharif after the prime minister threatened to repeal the constitutional amendment that gave the presidency much of its power, including the right to appoint the military's commander.

Rather than act as a check, the 1985 amendment created conflicting power centres that have repeatedly clashed. Mr. Sharif's was the third government to be dismissed in five years.

Previously, Pakistan had been mostly under military rule since its independence in 1947.

Acting Prime Minister Baluch Sher Mazari, who will head the

administration until elections July 14, said early Monday that he would act on the president's accusations of corruption if they could be proven.

A defiant Sharif dared the president to prove his charges. "If I have committed any crime, let him fight me in court," he told the Associated Press during a rally of hundreds of his party faithful.

"The dissolution has been condemned by the whole nation. We have the support of the people," he said.

Parliament Speaker Gohar Ayub, a Sharif supporter, petitioned the high court to issue an injunction against the presidential decree. The court will hear the case Tuesday.

Mr. Sharif moved out of the prime minister's official residence early Monday and planned a whistle-stop train journey to his home town of Lahore Tuesday to begin his political revival.

Followers promised mass demonstrations in Punjab. Mr. Sharif's home province, which

(Continued on page 5)

Demirel may succeed Ozal as head of state

ANKARA (R) — Turkish commentators Monday tipped Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel to win an awkward race for president after Turgut Ozal's sudden death Saturday.

Mr. Demirel has yet to confirm he will be a contender, but he told Hurriyet newspaper such expectations were natural.

"It is natural for the people to consider this for me as a person who has been in Turkish politics for 30 years," he said.

A 10-day nomination period begins on April 27. Parliament has a further 21 days to choose a new president.

Mr. Demirel said his duty was to avert any succession crisis, but Mr. Ozal's unexpected demise has plunged Turkey into an imbroglio which could upset the existing political equation.

The conundrum for politicians is how to replace Mr. Ozal without subjecting the nation to more of the ill-tempered cohabitation which marked the late president's relations with Mr. Demirel.

For would-be presidents, the dilemma is how to secure the top job without destroying their own

parties in the process.

Since parliament is to elect the new president, ordinary Turks will have no direct say in whether they get a dynamic, opinionated head of state such as Mr. Ozal or an even-handed figurehead who will not meddle in politics.

Turkish columnists said Mr. Demirel was the strongest potential candidate, but warned that taking on the presidency could carry heavy consequences for him and his True Path Party (DYP).

They predicted that such a move would cause the break-up of the 17-month-old coalition between the centre-right DYP and the Social Democrat Populist Party (SDHP) led by Etilal Inonu.

Mr. Demirel, 69, may want to crown his long political career with a seven-year stint as head of state. But Suhah columnist Ahmet Tan said it could be political suicide for him to step down as prime minister before fulfilling election promises.

"If Baha (father, Demirel's nickname) dens the government in favour of a post lacking responsibility, he cannot justify this to his party or the public."

Aqaba-bound ship turned away - third this month

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A Sudanese-flag ship under charter to a largely Jordanian government-owned shipping company was intercepted and prevented from proceeding to the port of Aqaba by the enforcers of the international embargo against Iraq in the third incident of its kind this month, the head of the company said Monday.

Yasser Al Tal, director-general of the Jordan National Shipping Lines, said the vessel, Omdurman, was carrying 12,000 tonnes of general cargo bound for the Jordanian market from Europe.

Inspectors based on an American frigate, part of the international force patrolling the Red Sea to enforce the sanctions against Iraq, boarded the vessel in the Tiran Straits at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba and ordered it to turn back, Mr. Tal told the Jordan

Times.

"Despite the captain's offer to ensure inspection accessibility to all the cargo, including those in the lower hold, the inspectors demanded that the vessel unload part of the cargo at some other port before being allowed to proceed to Aqaba," Mr. Tal said.

The cargo that the inspectors wanted unloaded included 200 tonnes of water pipes and some containers as well as some mobile cranes, he said.

Subsequently, the vessel had no choice but to proceed to Port Suez to meet with the demands of the inspectors, Mr. Tal said, adding:

"This diversion is going to cost at least \$50,000 extra, and we have no choice but to reflect it on our charges from the importers."

Mr. Tal noted that the Jordan National Shipping Lines is 75 per cent government-owned and its operations are strictly guided by the policies set by

the government.

"It is inconceivable that our ships will carry any cargo in violation of the sanctions," he said. Furthermore, he added, "all exporters and shippers provide us with every necessary document, including U.N. permission wherever necessary, at the point of origin, particularly the European ports which abide by the sanctions to the letter."

The Omdurman, which took on its cargo from Belgium, German and British ports, was the third ship to be intercepted and prevented from proceeding to Aqaba this month.

Al Abiad, another Sudanese vessel, and the Windfield, a Norwegian ship, were blocked at the Tiran Straits on April 7 and April 14 respectively.

The vessels, carrying general cargo and newsprint for the Jordanian market, were diverted to other Red Sea ports to unload part of their cargo.

In both cases the reason cited by the inspectors was inaccessibility to cargo for inspection.

"It seems that whenever a new frigate takes up position (as part of the sanction enforcers), it makes it a point to intercept and turn back two or three ships bound for Aqaba," said Mr. Tal, quoting an old proverb: "New brooms sweep the roof."

Jordanian shipping agents and merchants made their long-standing concerns known to a group of officers from the international force in the Red Sea who visited Jordan three weeks ago and were hoping that the overzealous inspection methods would be relaxed, Mr. Tal said.

"The costly diversions and discharging of cargo elsewhere and the subsequent transshipment are damaging the national economy and leading to increased prices in the market," he noted.

Mubarak replaces interior minister; militants happy

By Dalia Baligh
The Associated Press

CAIRO — President Hosni Mubarak has appointed a new interior minister, replacing the man whose harsh campaign failed to stanch anti-government violence and raised accusations of human rights abuses.

The new minister has firsthand experience with the militants and is a known crusader against corruption, one of the radicals' main complaints in their holy war to replace Egypt's secular government with strict Islamic rule.

Moreover, police Major General Hassan Al Afify, 57, is not a member of Mr. Mubarak's political party, which is sure to win favour with militants.

It was uncertain how widely Gen. Hassan's policies may differ from his predecessor, Abdul Halim Musa. But analysts expect the militants to suspend attacks on tourist sites and other areas as they await his first move.

A senior extremist leader of the Islamic Group in the trouble spot of Assiut, 320 kilometres south of Cairo, immediately welcomed the new minister's appointment Sunday.

"The Islamic Group has received with happiness the news that Al Afify has been appointed," said Mahmoud Sayed Selim, leader of the group's military branch, in a statement to reporters.

"We know that he is honest and against corruption," he said.

"He knows a lot about us. His appointment could decrease the confrontation between us and the security authorities."

The Islamic Group has about 200,000 supporters, many men in their 20s, and about 10,000 are believed to be armed. After targeting security forces and members of the Coptic Christian community, they turned on foreign tourists last year and have already caused a 50 per cent drop in tourism, Egypt's top foreign currency earner.

The leader of the group is said to be radical Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, who faces deportation from the United States. At least four of the suspects in the Feb. 26 World Trade Centre bombing that killed six people and wounded more than 1,000 attended the blind cleric's sermons at a mosque in New York.

As governor of Assiut for the past two years, Gen. Al Afify has dealt directly with the extremists. Shortly after Mr. Mubarak swore him in, Gen. Al Afify told reporters of the need to establish "safety and security for everyone in Egypt and a decisive and effective confrontation with extremists and terrorists."

In brief remarks, he blamed difficult economic circumstances and unemployment for the spread of extremism.

Since the beginning of 1992, 139 people have been killed in clashes, most of them militants. Critics have accused the government of abusing human rights and



Abdul Halim Musa

fostering violence with violence. In his last week in office, Mr. Musa opened a dialogue with the radicals through a committee of religious leaders. Mr. Musa apparently angered the government by discussing the mediation publicly.

Prime Minister Atef Sedki denied the government was talking with the radicals.

"There cannot be a dialogue with these criminals who kill innocent people and strike against the interest of the nation," he told reporters after Gen. Al Afify was sworn in.

Hisham Mubarak, a lawyer who studies the militants' anti-government campaign, said the ministerial change will bring a temporary truce between the government and the extremists.

"The upcoming period will witness a reduction of violent acts," he told the Associated Press. "The Islamic Group will give the new minister a chance and will test him. It will not escalate anything unless police start first."

Iraq to allow visits by Iranian pilgrims

NICOSIA (Agencies) — A senior Iraqi official says his country is ready to admit Iranian pilgrims, the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Monday.

The invitation was extended Sunday by Iraq's deputy minister of endowments and religious affairs, Hamed Al Qabisi, who is in Iran to attend a religious congress, according to the agency, which is monitored in Nicosia.

His presence at the gathering, as well as the invitation to pilgrims, is a sign of growing cooperation between Iran and Iraq, which fought a bloody war from 1980-88.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries remain strained. Iran accuses Baghdad of harbouring Iranian rebels, while Iraq accuses Tehran of aiding Shiite Muslim rebels operating in southern Iraq.

But recent reports indicate that Iran is sending food worth millions of dollars into Iraq in return for cement and fertilizer. The trade is prohibited by U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Mr. Qabisi is in Iran at a congress honouring Sheikh Mufid, a Shiite Muslim scholar who died in 1022. The three-day conference, which began Saturday, is being held in the Iranian city of Qom, the centre of Shiite learning in Iran, IRNA said.

The conference has drawn scholars and researchers from 25

countries, it said.

Mr. Qabisi told the news agency that the presence of an Iraqi delegation at the congress was "a sign of improvement of Tehran-Baghdad ties," the news agency said.

Sites holy to Shiite Muslims are in the Iraqi cities of Karbala, Najaf, Kazmin and Samarra.

IRNA said Mr. Qabisi "declared his country's readiness to admit Iranian pilgrims."

Mr. Qabisi was willing to discuss arrangement for visits to Karbala, Najaf, Kazmin and Samarra, it said.

Iranians could not visit them during the Iran-Iraq war or after Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Shells hit Kurds in Iraq

An Iranian Kurdish rebel group said Iran's army began shelling its headquarters in northern Iraq Monday in preparation for a ground attack.

The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) said the attack was concentrated near Ranya just inside the western-imposed "no-fly" zone in northern Iraq and could lead to "widespread killing and destruction."

"The Islamic Republic (of Iran) ... began intensive bombardment of the area at 10.55 a.m. local time," it said in a statement sent to Reuters from its European office in Paris.

Ceasefire, fresh talks raise peace hopes in Sudan

By Mohammad Ali Saad
Agency France Press

KHARTOUM — A ceasefire that is apparently holding and agreement for a date on new talks have caused hopes to rise that a lasting peace is possible in Sudan.

Observers here see the new optimism as a sharp contrast to the anticipated offensive that the government appeared to be planning to recapture territories in south Sudan still under the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

The government was believed to be planning operations similar to the code-named "Operation

Summer Crossing" last year in which government troops succeeded in retaking several major towns, including Yorit, the SPLA stronghold, from rebel control.

However, the authorities have responded positively to a ceasefire declared unilaterally last March by the SPLA main faction led by Colonel John Garang.

The ceasefire between Col. Garang's men and government troops was still holding and had even extended to include other SPLA factions, according to government spokesman Ali Al Haj Muhammad at a press conference last week.

The spokesman had returned from "proximity" talks with Col.

Garang in the Nigerian capital Abuja. He said he had accused Col. Garang of using the ceasefire with the government as an opportunity to purge his rival factions.

Peace prospects were further encouraged by an encounter arranged by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni between Col. Garang and Mr. Muhammad at the northern Ugandan town of Entebbe, and by the latest meeting in Abuja where Nigerian mediators obtained an agreement on substantive talks to be held in Abuja on April 26.

The Abuja negotiations would be between the government and Col. Garang's SPLA faction only,

excluding rival factions.

Mr. Muhammad told the press conference that the government gave priority to talks with Col. Garang because he had become the "brandname" worldwide for the rebel movement.

However, he added, the talks with Col. Garang would not bar them from having similar talks with the other rebel factions.

For this reason, a government delegation would travel to Kenya in the near future to meet these factions and explore their positions, he said.

Since the 1991 overthrow of hardline leader Mengistu Haile Mariam in neighbouring Ethiopia, the SPLA has splintered, with three dissident factions led by former Garang aides.

Rek Machar and Lam Akol head one faction, and William Nyuon and Karbo Bo head two others. According to recent reports, the factions recently formed themselves into a single organisation under Mr. Rek Machar.

Observers anticipate considerable difficulty with the upcoming talks, with the government advocating a federal system in which Sudan would be divided into nine regions each enjoying legislation of its own choice, and Col. Garang insisting on a confederation of two separate states, one in the north and the other in the south.

Mr. Rek Machar is known to favour the more radical position of full secession for south Sudan.

Arafat activist shot dead in Sidon

SIDON (AP) — Two gunmen assassinated a regional commander of Yasser Arafat's main-stream Fatah faction Monday in South Lebanon, the latest death in a war with the Abu Nidal group.

Police said the assailants pumped 11 bullets from silencer-equipped pistols into Dr. Ibrahim Turkiyeh, who served as chief dentist for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in the port city of Sidon.

Dr. Turkiyeh, 47, Fatah's commander, was attacked outside a medical depot in downtown Sidon at 10 a.m. (0700 GMT).

Police said they believed Dr. Turkiyeh's assassination was the latest in a series of tit-for-tat killings between Fatah and Abu Nidal's breakaway Fatah-Revolutionary Council.

At least 25 people on both sides have been killed since last June.

In another incident that could be related to the Fatah-Abu Nidal feud, the bullet-riddled bodies of two men were discovered at the northern entrance to Sidon.

Police said they believed one of the victims was a Palestinian and the other a Syrian. They said the men probably were killed two or three days ago.

Their faces were unrecognisable because of gunshot wounds, police said.

"We are investigating their case on the bases that the two victims were probably members of Abu Nidal's group," said a police spokesman, who cannot be identified by name under security rules.

Further south near the port city of Tyre, the car of Fatah's commander of the Shabirah refugee camp, Yehya Nabil Al Masri, was blown up Monday by a remote-control bomb.

Police said the green Mercedes was destroyed and that a resulting fire damaged two empty houses nearby. No casualties were reported.

The killings began on June 3, 1992, when Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) intelligence chief Aref Basio was gunned down in Paris. The rest of the attacks have occurred in Lebanon.

Abu Nidal, whose real name is Sabri Al Batna, broke from Fatah in 1973 and was sentenced to death by a Fatah revolutionary court, which tried him in absentia in 1974.

Mr. Arafat views Abu Nidal as a reckless maverick whose unruly extremism damaged PLO interests and image.

Abu Nidal brands Mr. Arafat a "capitalist" for his efforts to seek a political settlement with Israel and has vowed to strike at Israel and its Western supporters.

Abu Nidal tops the "most wanted" list in the United States and many European nations.

Jordan assails Israeli siege of occupied lands

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has condemned Israel's three-week old closure of the occupied territories and its ban on Palestinian labourers entering the Jewish state.

In a letter, headlined Israel acts, Jordan reacts, in the April 16 issue of the International Herald Tribune, the Crown Prince said:

"The Israeli attempt to ban Palestinian labour is an act of oppression contrary to international labour laws and customs. It can only be seen as a measure of collective punishment, a misguided response to the escalation of Palestinian resistance to occupation. Its profoundly negative consequences are already being felt, both in the occupied territories and among Israeli employers."

"Israel's claim that the occupied territories have benefited economically from occupation is bogus, in fact, the regime imposed by Israel has caused the collapse of the existing economic structure. No new work opportunities have been created in the territories during the years of

occupation. This fact, together with oppressive restriction on Palestinian enterprise, has meant that most Palestinian workers have been forced to work in Israel or to emigrate. And Israel is now closing the door to the only work remaining to those under occupation."

A meeting of Arab ministers of labour held recently in Amman decided to put a request forward to the director-general of the International Labour Organisation to call on Israel to guarantee freedom of labour for all Palestinian workers. The purpose is not to demand that Israel grant employment opportunities in the Israeli community, but to loosen the economic hegemony imposed by Israel through its military occupation.

"Is a ban on Arab labour conducive to confidence-building? Is it an effective way to fight what Israel describes as extremism? One thing is certain: The ban is a sure way of exacerbating tensions that are already at breaking point, and creating a climate not for peace and mutual understanding but for further grief on all sides."

UNRWA warns Arabs of socio-economic emergency

VIENNA (Agencies) United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Commissioner General Turkmen has warned that "the rapidly growing hardship of Palestinians in the occupied territory may soon surpass UNRWA's financial ability to respond."

Speaking in Cairo on Sunday at a special session of the Council of Ministers of the Arab League, Mr. Turkmen called upon Arab countries to provide greater financial support to the United Nations agency responsible for providing services to more than 2.7 million Palestine refugees in the Middle East.

Even prior to the Israeli-ordered sealing of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in late March, which Mr. Turkmen described as "economic asphyxiation," UNRWA was facing a budget deficit of \$28.5 million and confronting the possibility of having to cut services if additional funds were not made available. Today, tens of thousands of Palestinian workers are idle, prevented by the closure from going to work in Israel. Wage losses to the Gaza Strip alone are estimated at \$750,000 per day.

The local economies of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have also been disrupted by the closure and resulting movement restrictions leading to millions of dollars of losses in agriculture, industry, transport and commerce. Unemployment was at least 40 per cent in the Gaza Strip and about 25 per cent in the West Bank prior to the sealing. If, as expected, new regulations and stricter monitoring are enacted to reduce the number of Palestinian labourers allowed to work in Israel, much of the responsibility for

addressing the human cost will fall on UNRWA.

UNRWA interviews with Palestinians in Gaza Strip refugee camps indicate that some families have been forced to liquidate possessions to generate cash to buy food because their savings are depleted. Local businesses have laid off large numbers of workers because they have no access to raw material and consumer demand has fallen. Agricultural products intended for the West Bank or external markets are being dumped locally, causing prices to fall between 50 per cent and 90 per cent. In the West Bank, merchants report that consumer purchases of fruits have dropped by 80 per cent, eggs by 50 per cent and meat by 60 per cent.

Mr. Turkmen explained that "steadily deteriorating economic conditions of Palestinians in the occupied territory as well as in Lebanon have pushed people who did not in the past depend on UNRWA services to turn to the Agency for basic support."

UNRWA provides basic health care, education and relief and social services to Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, West Bank and Gaza Strip. UNRWA's 118 health clinics receive six million patient visits annually; 69 schools provide education to over 350,000 pupils; 5,000 students attend UNRWA vocational training centres; and 180,000 persons are registered with UNRWA's special hardship programme which provides food rations to the poorest refugees. UNRWA has previously announced that it could be forced to begin reducing some services beginning July 1 unless additional funds are received.

Faulty Scuds deprive N. Korea of oil

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea's oil imports shrank drastically last year, partly due to faulty Scud missiles exported to Iran as barter payment, an official at a South Korean state-backed thinktank said Monday.

North Korea's oil imports fell to approximately 1.35 million tonnes last year from 1.93 million tonnes in 1991 and 2.54 million tonnes in 1990, said Ko Il-Dong of the Korean Development Institute's (KDI) Centre for North Korean Economic Studies.

Imports from Iran fell to 220,000 tonnes, down from 640,000 tonnes imported from the Middle East — mainly Iran — the

previous year and 980,000 tonnes from Iran in 1990, Mr. Ko said. KDI had no specific figures for Iran in 1991 but Mr. Ko said imports from Iran took up the lion's share of imports from the Middle East.

He said oil imports from Iran were shrinking because the Scud missiles Pyongyang sent Tehran in exchange had some defects and it had little else with which it could use to barter for the oil.

North Korea's oil imports have also shrunk because, hit with a deteriorating economy, it had little hard currency and few commodities with which to pay other suppliers, he said.

Imports from China, Pyongyang's last remaining communist mentor, have also dropped as Chinese firms are aiming more at turning a profit than in aiding ideological allies, he said.

Imports from China totalled 1.05 million tonnes of crude oil last year, down from 1.1 million tonnes the year before. He said it was still unclear how deeply a Chinese decision to halt barter trade.

In the past, he said, 45 per cent of Chinese oil shipments were paid for in commodity goods while 55 per cent were considered a loan, which was in effect never paid off.

The National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation

Concerts and Recitals
Theatre: The Royal Cultural Centre

Thursday, 22 April 1993 - 8:00 p.m.

A MUSICAL ENCOUNTER:

QANUN & PIANO

A unique musical event: Gamal Abdul Mufti (qanun) and Hans Lorchbacher and Christian Seufert (piano) will show the correlation between the Qanun and the Piano. The program will include solo qanun and 4-hand piano pieces by Ravel, Poulenc and Satie.

Ticket Price: JD 5

In Cooperation with Goethe Institut - Amman

Saturday, 24 April 1993 - 8:00 p.m.

CLARINET & PIANO RECITAL

A dynamic performance presented by Agnes Baslir (piano) and Ali Shawk (clarinet), two gifted members of the National Music Conservatory. The program will include pieces by Vivaldi, Mozart, Chopin and others.

Ticket Price: JD 5

Attend all activities for JD 16

The National Music Conservatory, tel. 687620

Sunday, 25 April 1993 - 8:00 p.m.

VIOLIN & PIANO RECITAL

Seth Taylor (violin) and Monica Ripamonti (piano) will perform three violin sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms. Their recital reinforces the application of Classical well-tempered tuning (A=432) and its implication to a better music appreciation.

Ticket Price: JD 5

In cooperation with Schiller Institute

Thursday, 29 April 1993 - 8:00 p.m.

PHILIPPE CARMENT TRIO

A Jazz recital by Philippe Carment (piano), Jean-Benoit Culot (drums) and Lionel Guillen (double bass).

Ticket Price: JD 5

In cooperation with the French Cultural Centre.



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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 7111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Territories
18:30 Magay
19:00 News in French
19:15 Uthman
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Boudia Abou
21:00 Forever Green
22:00 News in English
22:30 Classical feature film

PRAYER TIMES

04:30 Fajr
16:00 (Sunrise) Dhuha
12:35 Asr
16:13 Maghrib
19:11 Isha
20:32 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 634741
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623341

Anglican Church Tel. 624551, Tel. 625433
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 713331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775291
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 624932, 624932
Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691
Church of the Redeemer ... Tel. 638526

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Gradual drop in temperatures will take place and clouds will increase gradually. There will be a chance of scattered showers of rain and winds will be westerly moderate. In Amman, it will be partly cloudy with northerly moderate winds and calm seas.

Min/Max temp. 14 / 22
Amman 30 / 31
Djessra 12 / 24
Jordan Valley 18 / 29

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 25 per cent, Amman 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Youssef Nasser 751144
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Dr. Mohammed Al Nadei 69925
Dr. Khalid Mu'addi 743500
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Nairoukh pharmacy 626072
Al Salam pharmacy 636700
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shimshani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 626072
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Masek Shamsir (—)
Alqud pharmacy (—)

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 893390
Public Security Department 608000
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 767111
Telephone Information 121
Directory assistance 00230
Overseas Calls 623101
Repairs 623101

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642632
Jabal Amman Maternity 641410
Malles, J. Amman 641714
Palestine, Shamsani 669131
Shamsani Hospital 843945
University Hospital 6672279
Al-Musharraf Hospital 66612737
Al-Abdi, Abadi 6641646
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77101/3
Army, Maria 891611/15
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 686100
Amal Hospital 674155

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)532043, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
06:30 Dhahran (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
07:15 Damascus (RJ)
08:00 Amman (RJ)
09:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 Vienna (RJ)
12:15 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:45 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:50 Madrid (RJ)
12:50 Geneva, London (RJ)
13:25 Frankfurt (RJ)
13:55 Cairo (RJ)
14:05 London (RJ)
14:15 Damascus, Larissa (RJ)
14:20 Aden (RJ)
14:25 Larnaca (RJ)
14:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

16:45 Rome (A2)



HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday receives the Omani Minister of Industry and Trade Magboul Ben Ali Sultan (second from right). Mr. Sultan, who was received in a special audience at the Royal Court, conveyed the greetings of Sultan Qaboos of Oman and those of the Omani people to His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian people. Prince Hassan and the Omani minister reviewed results of talks between the Omani delegation and Jordanian officials. The Crown Prince stressed the need for setting up a joint information centre on trade and industrial

investments, to enhance bilateral cooperation between both countries. He also emphasised the need to promote closer cooperation in the area of human development with all its comprehensive concepts through the specialised councils available in both countries, such as the Omani Development Council and the Higher Council for Science and Technology. The Omani minister expressed his government's interest in cooperation in the field of applied scientific research, particularly on water desalination (Petra photo)

Visiting Omani trade minister reviews issues with officials

AMMAN (Petra) — Visiting Omani Minister of Industry and Trade Magboul Ben Ali Sultan was received at separate meetings Monday by the ministers of Supply, Agriculture and Health to discuss enhancing trade relations and other fields of cooperation.

At the meeting with Supply Minister Mohammad Al Saqqaf, Mr. Sultan called for correcting the trade balance, which is currently in favour of Jordan, and urged the supply ministry to reimport Omani fish.

Mr. Saqqaf informed the Omani minister that the Jordanian market is open to all kinds of fish and that at the present time the private sector is importing sufficient quantities.

He stressed that the supply ministry will reconsider the Omani request.

On the other hand, Mr. Saqqaf called on the Omani side to import Jordanian fruit. The two ministers agreed to hold a meeting next month for officials from both ministries to discuss the possibilities of these import matters.

Also Monday Agriculture Minister Fayez Khasawneh discussed with Mr. Sultan the idea of establishing joint companies, which will be responsible for organising import and export processes.

The two ministers also discussed issues pertaining to exchanges of agricultural experiences, particularly in relation to drip irrigation, rationalising the use of water for irrigation, sheltered agriculture, reuse of waste water and production of veterinary drugs and fertilisers.

Mr. Sultan said his ministry plans to facilitate the flow of commodities between both countries by granting visas to Jordanian trucks entering Oman and easing the related procedures.

The two ministers agreed to a proposal whereby a Jordanian trade delegation representing the public and private sectors will visit Oman to inspect the needs of Omani markets and work out a formula for commercial cooperation regarding Jordanian agricultural products, fertilisers, eggs, and veterinary drugs.

Health Minister Aref Al Badaneh also received Mr. Sultan and focused discussions on the possibility of sending Jordanian nursing instructors to teach at nursing schools in Oman and assigning visiting professors to give lectures on nursing at Oman's nursing colleges.

The Omani delegation also toured Sahab Industrial City and was briefed on its activities by Fayez Suheimat, director general of Jordan Industrial Estates Corporation.

In a related development, technical committees from the Joint Higher Jordanian-Omani Committee held a meeting Monday at the Ministry of Industry and Trade and discussed means of supporting and developing the volume of trade between both countries in the various industrial, cultural, commercial, technical and tourism areas.

They also discussed the possibility of establishing a joint holding company.

On Sunday, the joint committee met under the chairmanship of Industry and Trade Minister Abdullah Ensour and his Omani counterpart Mr. Sultan, and discussed means of increasing and diversifying the balance of trade in both countries.

Jordan's exports to Oman last year totalled JD 1.2 million, while Jordan's imports from Oman were around JD 992,000.

Crown Prince reviews financing with visiting IDB president

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan the Regent Monday received at the Royal Court President of the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Ahmad Mohammad Ali and reviewed with him the area of financing short-term and long-term trading.

Prince Hassan also discussed with Mr. Ali scopes of cooperation between the bank and the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation, which has carried out several development and rehabilitation projects within the framework of the Arab and Islamic Relief and Cooperation Projects.

The Crown Prince and Mr. Ali reviewed projects being financed partly by the bank to enhance their production capacity, such as the Arab Potash Company's expansion projects, Shideh phosphates project and some of the University of Jordan's projects in the areas of science and technology, as well as the expansion of Aqaba port.

Prince Hassan and Dr. Ali focused on the need to direct special attention to human development on the basis of an integrated social package, and scientifically analysing the problems faced by the Islamic world, particularly poverty and unemployment.

Water experts to review information access, use

AMMAN (J.T.) — Water and information management experts will meet in Amman today to discuss ways of improving water supply and sanitation programmes by applying lessons learned in the country, or from regional and global knowledge and experience.

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (a global forum of professionals working in the sector) has identified lack of access and use of information as one of the major constraints to the development of sustainable water supply and sanitation services.

Mutah opens first electrical engineering meeting

100 participants will seek to revitalise research

MUTAH (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Monday opened the first Jordanian electrical engineering conference to be held at Mutah University.

Addressing the opening session, University Acting-president Mohammad Kheir Mamsar welcomed Sharif Zeid and said the conference was held in response to His Majesty King Hussein's call for the Arab Nation to come up to date with all contemporary cultural and scientific developments.

Dr. Mamsar said the participation by a unique group of scholars from the various universities and scientific institutions is evidence of the awareness and live response to King Hussein's call.

He pointed out that the university's plans to participate in national development stem from its conviction that culture plays a major role in comprehensive national development.

Dr. Mamsar said that through its programmes and scientific plans the university seeks to concentrate on scientific approaches, intensifying efforts to promote them and strengthening their foundations.

He reviewed some of the cultural achievements made by the university in the areas of research, publishing, organising symposiums, and interaction with local communities.

He stressed the importance of conferences and symposiums in attaining high standards of scientific research and developing and promoting the spirit of innovation and novelty.

Dean of the engineering faculty Yousef Jaafreh said the conference is the first episode in a series of specialised scientific conferences, which the university seeks to organise locally, regionally and internationally.

Dr. Jaafreh said that linking between scientific research and national development is one of the most prominent features and one of the established facts at the present time. He said the convening of this first engineering conference in the south of Jordan is a practical translation of the university's objectives to support scientific research, strengthen its foundations and direct the attention of researchers to the need for linking scientific research and comprehensive development, particularly in the southern region of Jordan.

He pointed out that the engineering faculty does not only seek to graduate engineers, but also to achieve a higher degree of interaction with the local communities through participation in building basic concepts on the social and economic formulas of development and drawing up the technical and engineering studies needed to open the panorama of Arab and Islamic achievements.

The faculty also seeks to undertake the necessary technical studies on the establishment of mini cities near the university, in cooperation with the Industrial Estates Corporation.

It also aims to create an ideal university village for the teaching and administrative staff of Mutah University.

Taking part in the conference which seeks to revitalise scientific research are 100 researchers from various academic and industrial institutions in Jordan.

The three-day conference will discuss 26 research and eight working papers in the areas of electronics, telecommunication, energy, remote control and computers.

Sharif Zeid also opened a book exhibition held on the sidelines of the conference and the Jordanian Electric Industries exhibition.

Attending the opening ceremony were Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Thouqan Al Hindawi, Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Ali Suheimat, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Abdel Hafez Miral Al Kaabneh and senior government and civil officials.

Later Monday Sharif Zeid, who is chairman of the Royal Commission for Mutah University, chaired a meeting of the commission, during which he called on the university to review the method of admitting students so that it conforms to the needs of the community in the various major fields of study.

He also urged undertaking a detailed study on the university's needs for qualified teaching staff to maintain excellent academic standards.

Dr. Mamsar briefed Sharif Zeid on the situation of the university and its future aspirations and reviewed the organisational structure of the university, as well as the organisational structure of the students federation.



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Monday opens Mutah University's first electrical engineering conference



Government, military, security, and university officials, as well as tens of experts Monday attend the opening session of Mutah University's first electrical engineering conference (Petra photo)

Islamic commerce meetings begin

AMMAN (Petra) — The executive committee of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Commodity Exchange opened its 21st meeting in Amman Monday with the participation of delegations representing 17 Arab states, as well as the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour, in an opening address, called for bolstering economic, commercial and technological cooperation among Islamic states.

Dr. Ensour said the Islamic peoples who represent one-fifth of the world population are targeted at the present time, when changes are sweeping the world arena.

The minister said the Islamic states should develop economic relations between them through granting preferential treatment to each other, encouraging joint ventures, exchanging trade fairs periodically and benefiting from financial assistance offered by the Islamic Development Bank.

He said Jordan implemented such schemes before others had even expounded them.

In 1991, he said, the volume of trade exchange between Jordan and other Islamic countries accounted for 31 per cent of the volume of its foreign trade exchange.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King condoles Turkish acting-president

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday sent a cable to acting Turkish President Husametdin Cindoruk, condoling him on the death of Turkish President Turgut Ozal. Also Sunday His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad sent a cable of condolences, voicing his deep sorrow and regret over the death of President Ozal.

Crown Prince receives Circassian society group

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan the Regent Sunday received at the Royal Court a delegation representing the International Circassian Society. Prince Hassan Monday delegated deputy director of his office Abdullah Kanaan to convey his condolences to the family over the death of Abdullah Salan Al Abdullah.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition entitled "The Legend of Petra II" by artist Suhay Shoman at the National Gallery for Fine Arts.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Recreation" by Jordanian, French and Iraqi artists, inspired by a sculpture by Iraqi artist Mohammed Hussein Abdullah, at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Samia Al Zaru and Adnan Yahya at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by Syrian Artist Lujaina Al Aseel at Baladna Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of books and educational facilities at the International Expo Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of prints, entitled "Architectural Motifs from the Arab World," by Rima Farah at the gallery, Hotel Jordan Intercontinental.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Hanan Al Dasouqi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of chemical materials and experiments for school students at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST).

THEATRE

- ★ Arabic play entitled "The Dawn and Sunset of a Girl Called Yasmin" at 7 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ English play entitled "The Right Size" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8 p.m.

POETRY

- ★ Poetry recital by Syrian poet Shawqi Baghdadi at the Scientific and Cultural Centre of Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.

Viel zu früh hat uns unsere Kollegin und Mitarbeiterin

Beate Christen
als Folge eines tragischen Verkehrsunfalls am 16. April 1993 für immer verlassen. Wir werden ihr erfrischende, humorvolle Fröhlichkeit, ihre Hilfsbereitschaft und ihre tatkräftige Art sehr vermissen. Sie hinterlässt eine Lücke in unserem Botschaftsteam, die sich nur schwer wird schließen lassen.

Botschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Amman

Eine Gedenkfeier wird am Mittwoch, dem 21. April 1993 um 17:00 Uhr in der Lutherschen Kirche zum Guten Hirten, Mekka Street, stattfinden.

Traueranschrift:
Artur und Martha Christen
c/o Deutsche Botschaft Amman

Our colleague Ms. Beate Christen departed too early, as a result of fatal car accident on 16. 04. 1993. By her tragic death we lost a dear and beloved colleague of pleasant nature, joyful and extremely co-operative. Beate's death created emptiness in our Embassy quite difficult to fill.

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Amman.

- Memorial service will take place at the Arabic Lutheran Church, Mecca Str. on Wednesday, 21st April 1993 at 5 p.m.

- Condolences can be sent to:
Artur and Martha Christen
c/o Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Amman.

Parliamentary delegation returns from talks in India

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian parliamentary delegation headed by Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat returned to Amman from New Delhi Monday after participating in the 89th Conference of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) which opened there April 12.

Dr. Arabiyat told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, upon arrival that at the five-day conference a working paper presented by the Jordanian delegation reviewed the democratisation process in the Kingdom, democracy in the Arab and Islamic worlds and dimensions of the expulsion of about 400 Palestinians to South Lebanon by Israel last December.

He said the paper also dealt with the role of world parliamentarians in pressuring the Israeli occupation authorities to release Palestinian detainees and prisoners, allow the expellees to return to their homes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, meeting the needs of the Palestinian people, and stressing their right to establish their independence.

The delegation accompanying Dr. Arabiyat to the conference included Deputy Taher Al Masri, Senator Abdullah Salah, Deputy Husni Al Shayyah and Parliament Secretary General Saleh Al Zu'bi.

Dr. Arabiyat said the Jordanian delegation has conveyed to Indian President Ramaswamy Venkataraman and other Indian officials the greetings of His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian government and people.

The Indian president, he said, asked the Jordanian team to convey his greetings and appreciation to King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent and the Jordanian people.

CONDOLENCES

The editor and staff of the Jordan Times deeply mourn the passing of
Pop Vasile
father of their friend and colleague
Ica Wahbeh

May Ica and Hassan be comforted that they were able to share some tender moments with their father when he visited Jordan with Mrs. Vasile recently.

CONDOLENCES

The Friends of Archaeology Society offers its sincerest condolences to the family, friends, the ambassador and colleagues at the German Embassy in Amman on the untimely death of our member and friend

Beate Christen
due to a tragic car accident on Friday, April 16, 1993. We remember with affection this charming, delightful young woman who accompanied us on many of our activities. May God grant us all the understanding and acceptance of His will.

RANDA BEROUTI
Watercolours
at
ROMERO
April 19 - May 15

مطعم

الروزنة

الروزنة Restaurant

البيت

يعود لكم كما عهدتموه ويستقبل ضيوف

بجودة وخضرة الفرة

هاتف ٦١٣٥٧٢

الدوار الثاني - جبل عمان

Art Group

Beate Christen

als Folge eines tragischen Verkehrsunfalls am 16. April 1993 für immer verlassen. Wir werden ihr erfrischende, humorvolle Fröhlichkeit, ihre Hilfsbereitschaft und ihre tatkräftige Art sehr vermissen. Sie hinterlässt eine Lücke in unserem Botschaftsteam, die sich nur schwer wird schließen lassen.

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Artur and Martha Christen
c/o Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Amman.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
Established 1975
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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.

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Chance with time

BECAUSE Israel has been more interested in pursuing a separate treaty with Syria than in working for comprehensive peace with all Arabs, it was the right thing for Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa to state on Sunday that the Arab parties would either all participate in the ninth round of negotiations or none would. This positive twist towards showing stronger Arab solidarity is all the more important in view of the false impression hitherto entertained by Israel that most of the Arab countries would go ahead and take part in the Washington peace parley with or without the Palestinians.

In fact, the minister's statement should have come as no surprise to those who have been watching political developments vis-a-vis the resumption of the peace talks, which could now rest a week later than originally scheduled on a stronger base. The new time factor, albeit short, should give the negotiations an added impetus not only in terms of needed Arab cohesion but also in that it could provide new opportunities to resolve some of the remaining sticking points that precluded the restart of the talks on April 20. It appears that U.S. and Israeli assurances to the Palestinians in particular have not been strong enough to encourage the Palestinian delegation to engage once again in the peace process. For one thing, the issue of the expellees was compounded twenty days ago by Israel's arbitrary decision to seal off the occupied territories. And by doing so Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has played into the hands of the extremists on both sides of the fence and created new obstacles in the face of the already complex Israeli-Palestinian track. Even the significance of Rabin's grudging acceptance of the application of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 to the West Bank and Gaza Strip and his willingness to offer the Palestinians some legislative powers were effectively neutralised by the events taking place in the field. Israel can no longer sugarcoat its collective banishment of Palestinians and the siege of the West Bank and Gaza Strip even by spectacular policy announcements that would normally carry considerable weight and effect. The breathing space now accorded to the next stage of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations can still remove at least some of the discrepancies between the actions and rhetoric of Rabin's government. If this actually happens the resumption of the Washington parleys will take place one week late, but it will also have a better chance of being more productive and solid.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

JORDAN APPRECIATES the European countries' support for the Arab cause and for the rights of the Palestinian people, but such support is only in theory and not in practice, and does not become concrete unless the Europeans take practical steps to reestablish right and justice, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday. The European Community has, to date, refrained from taking one practical step to end the occupation of Arab land, neither did it move to contribute constructively towards ending the sufferings of the Palestinian people, the paper noted. This lack of action and the absence of the European role has given the Americans encouragement to impose their hegemony on the Arab-Israeli conflict, and indeed encouraged the Israelis to pursue their repressive and brutal actions against the Palestinian people, continued the paper. The Israelis have realised that the Europeans suffice themselves with mere statements issued on different occasions but do not follow them with actions, the paper pointed out. It said that the time has come for the European Community to end the present state of affairs and take meaningful action towards serving justice if the European statesmen really mean what they say. The Arab countries have long been calling for a real and positive role on the part of Europe towards ending the occupation of Arab lands in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and have been urging the Europeans to help establish peace in the Middle East, recalled the paper. It said that there is an urgent need now for Europeans to move speedily towards achieving this objective and to end Israel's arrogance and brutal treatment of the Palestinian people.

Saleh Qallab, a columnist in Al Dustour, Monday criticised the political stand of the leader of the Palestinian expellees now stranded in southern Lebanon for his call on the Palestinian people to renounce the PLO leadership. The writer said that Dr. Rantisi is calling on the Palestinians in the occupied land and the diaspora to elect a new leadership at a time when the Palestinians are facing brutal measures from the Israelis and at a time when he realises that his demand is impossible since no Palestinians inside or outside occupied Palestine can stage such elections. According to Dr. Rantisi, the Palestinians should not take part in the ongoing peace efforts because they lack a strong leadership to guide them, noted the writer. But, he continued, to leave them as they are and to ignore the present PLO leadership would mean leaving the Palestinians to the mercy of Israel and its brutal measures with no end in sight for the oppressed people's salvation. By denying the presence of the PLO leadership, Dr. Rantisi is taking the Palestinians back to square one leaving them in total confusion about the events around them and lacking will power to move ahead and save themselves from the present sufferings, noted the writer. The writer criticised Dr. Rantisi and his men in southern Lebanon for failing even to raise the Palestinian flag on their camp and for demanding that the Palestinians renounce their present leadership without offering a practical solution to the present dilemma.

The View from Fourth Circle

Racists, monkeys and settler-states

By Rami G. Khouri

HISTORIANS MAY well look back to these two months — March and April 1993 — as the physical birth of the State of Palestine, as opposed to its political birth in the late 1980s. Day-to-day events usually hide broader historical trends; the day-to-day violence and counter-violence that we have witnessed in Palestine/Israel in recent months hides the delineation of Israeli and Palestinian entities that are both still in the process of being born.

This process of national birth is visible in Israel's security and political policies towards the continued Palestinian uprising. The massive use of retributive military force and collective punishment, including undercover Israeli death squads that assassinate Palestinian resistance activists, did not solve Israel's "security" problem. The mass expulsion of over 400 Palestinians in December quickly led to intensified Palestinian resistance, including last week's Palestinian suicide car bomb attack.

Consequently, in a state of obvious confusion over why its traditional reliance on brute force has not brought calm and security, Israel has now closed off the occupied territories. Israel's housing minister said a few days ago that this move was irreversible, with only about 20,000 skilled Palestinians gradually to be allowed back to work in Israel, and the other 100,000 Palestinian day-workers to be barred permanently from employment in Israel in the future.

This desperate move will not be any more successful than the many other tactics that Israel has used in a futile attempt to evade dealing with the reality and vitality of Palestinian national identity. This month's latest twist to the Zionist political monkey's policy legacy of "see no Palestinians, hear no Palestinians, speak to no Palestinians" comes in the wake of a century of Zionist mythology and ideology based on the belief that if one wishes hard enough or shoots frequently enough the Palestinians — in this holy land of miracles — will miraculously disappear.

This month's closure of the occupied territories is very much in keeping with previous Zionist/Israeli policy: during the last century, Zionists and Israeli governments have dealt with the Palestinians by making believe they did not exist, buying them out, terrorising them out of their homes and communities, conquering and subjugating them, ignoring them, expelling or imprisoning them, enticing them with material benefits, trying to induce false, new Palestinian leaderships, suffocating them economically, isolating them politically, humiliating them, or beating them brutally.

None of these policies have worked. History speaks with a brutal clarity: the two seminal political events of Palestinian national and political life in the 20th century were the great strike of 1936-39 and the intifada of 1987-1993, two indigenous rebellions half a century apart, reflecting a people's will to live in freedom and national dignity. Israel's overwhelming political, military and economic power and its tremendous moral and material support from the Western powers have been unable to dull the glow of Palestinian national identity or to dissipate it in any manner. The Zionist gun has proved to be an ineffective

weapon against Palestinians who no longer are afraid to die.

Therefore, in the early spring of 1993, the Palestinian-Zionist struggle is more intense than ever before during this century. The physical intensity — knife killings, shootings and car bombings by Palestinians, and massive military overkill by Israelis — has given rise to an intellectual and political intensity reflected in the drastic move to isolate the occupied territories, to distance the Palestinians from the Israelis, and to hear Israelis talk of a "political" solution to the Palestine issue, rather than only a "security" solution. The continued Palestinian will to resist has forced Israel to come to grips with its massive historical failure: It has been able neither to assimilate and absorb the Palestinian people nor to destroy and disperse them.

"The human will to live in freedom is much stronger than the capacity of a distorted political ideology to subjugate an entire people. ... The isolation of the occupied territories and the ongoing peace talks will inevitably lead to political decisions to disengage Israel from Palestine."

The current policy of closing off the Palestinians is only a new twist to the Zionist political monkey's legacy of intemperate dreaming. It is the quintessentially racist face of Zionism in the finest tradition of South African apartheid — isolate the Palestinians in defined homelands watched over by a massive Zionist security force, draw on the skilled Palestinian labour that Israel needs to maintain its living standard and offer the Palestinians only symbolic rights. This policy, like the many others that Zionism has tried before to evade the Palestinian soul, will not work, because it is based on eluding reality rather than coming to terms with it. This policy will only accelerate the inevitable historical trend to separate Palestinians from Israelis.

In the short term, the Palestinians will suffer as the blacks in urban squatter townships suffered in South Africa in the last three decades. Living standards will decline and families will endure greater hardships, as the modern Zionist illusion plays itself out and proves to be just that — an illusion that tries to make believe there are no Palestinians in Palestine. Israel will now make one last effort to assert its military control over all the Palestinians, through the choking policies of the state or the freelance violence and vigilantism of the settler-colonialists. The suffering of the Palestinians to date will look relatively mild in the face of the hardships to come. This is the macabre phase of Zionist psychological frenzy, a grotesque ultimate solution in which Zionists place the entire Palestinian people in one large prison camp that is fenced off from the rest of the world, slowly to

suffocate, starve or leave.

It will not work, of course, for the same reasons that attempts by Nazi Germany to destroy the Jewish people did not work earlier this century. The human will to live in freedom is much stronger than the capacity of a distorted political ideology to subjugate an entire people. The Palestinians will endure further physical hardship, and the Zionists/Israelis will endure further national perversion and reassessment. The isolation of the occupied territories and the ongoing peace talks will inevitably lead to political decisions to disengage Israel from Palestine. The lead to political decisions to disengage Israel from Palestine. This will start to define the little Palestinian state that is now a very good historical bet, and it will also start to define the borders of a Zionist entity, a Jewish homeland, and an Israeli state that has remained vague, expansive, trigger-happy, and predatory in the last century.

The great challenge before all of us today is to channel the historical and emotional forces that emanate from this reality on the ground into political tendencies that can drive the peace talks towards success. Clearly, Zionists/Israelis and Palestinians cannot live together today in a single state, and they must find their distinct identities and rights in individual states. How we get to that point from our situation today will require a sophisticated, conciliatory and patient process of diplomacy that neutralises the anger and rancour of the past by offering a series of gains and rights that can define a more reasonable future for Palestinians, Israelis and the other concerned Arab states.

This transition from historical failure to future stability is taking place before our eyes every day. The more we recognise its component elements and exploit them to achieve our rights and aspirations, the sooner we are likely to check the audacious Zionist endeavour and to achieve the justice and the national normalcy we seek and deserve. One day, Arabs and Israelis will live in peace, justice, and mutual rights; one day, Christians, Muslims and Jews will live as brothers and sisters in an ancient land that God chose to deliver his message of fraternity to humankind. But that day will come only after today's Israeli policies are radically changed and replaced by a policy of rationality and composure. That change is underway.

Let us recognise what has happened this month: Israel has made an economic/political retreat from eastern Palestine; it camouflages this retreat in the vocabulary of "security," for it cannot speak the words of the truth of its failure. Following its partial retreat from southern Lebanon a few years ago, this is an important development in terms of modern Zionist history. It will be followed soon by a steady demographic retreat (a slowdown in settlement expansion) and then a military retreat in the context of a negotiated peace accord that should come to fruition in the next 10 years. Racists, monkeys, and settler-states are very predictable beasts, once the illusory nature of their world becomes clear to them.

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Worried about Boris, not Bosnia

By Peter Pringle

THE FRA of barefaced deception by Russian diplomats at the United Nations is over — well, sort of. Yuli Vorontsov, the long-serving Russian ambassador to the U.N., came out of a meeting of the Security Council last week and made a statement that was fully worthy of his days under Soviet rule. Looking the cameras in the eye, he said that Moscow's request to delay the council's vote on new sanctions against Belgrade was not coupled with any problems at home.

Everyone here in New York, in Washington, London, Paris and beyond, knows that the Russians asked for the delay so President Boris Yeltsin would not be saddled with an embarrassing Security Council vote against the Serbs, between now and the April 25 referendum on his economic reforms. The Russian leader told President Bill Clinton as much at the Vancouver summit.

So what was Mr. Vorontsov up to? He wants the world to be persuaded that there is no reason for a quick vote on new sanctions against Serbia while Russian diplomats are still trying to persuade the Serbs to cut back on their "ethnic cleansing," let through U.N. food supplies to Bosnia's besieged Muslims and return to the negotiating table prepared by Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen.

The problem is that no one at the U.N., or elsewhere it seems, has any confidence in Russian diplomacy being able to deliver

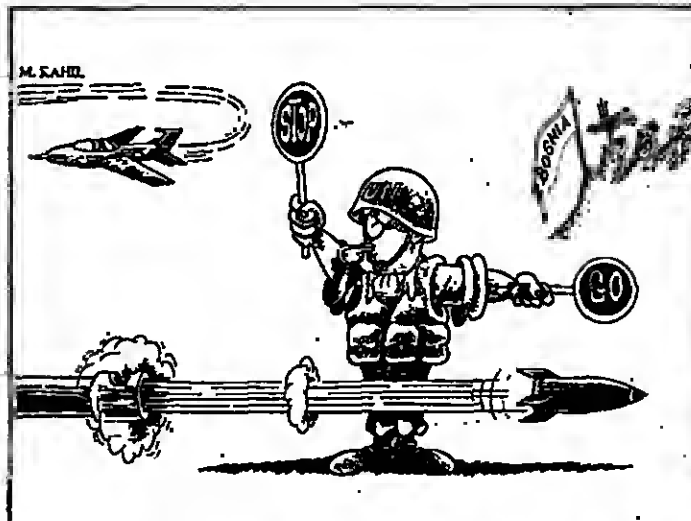
even one of these items. When Moscow's special envoy, Vitaly Churkin, reported this week on his talks with the Serbs, Mr. Vance and Lord Owen told the Security Council that they were now more depressed about the prospects of the Serbs signing up to the peace plan than they had been in recent days.

All of this has more than a whiff of Moscow's behaviour before the Gulf war. Then, seemingly endless diplomatic shuttles and last-minute negotiations with Iraqi leaders failed to produce a negotiated solution but successfully delayed the first allied attack on Baghdad.

So why did the Security Council accede to Russia's request for a delay in new sanctions? Because Mr. Clinton is busy building a personal relationship with Mr. Yeltsin.

At one level this is perfectly acceptable. If Mr. Clinton believes he can influence the outcome of the Russian referendum by preventing Mr. Yeltsin from being embarrassed by a Security Council vote, then the White House move is quite logical. The Bosnian Serbs, of course, have taken the U.N. inaction as a signal that they can continue to attack Muslims with impunity.

But an American president must not look at these things through a Bosnian prism. He is faced with the dilemma of maintaining wider relations between the United States and Russia. In addition, Mr. Clinton must guard against a possible comeback by the right wing, which on some



distant day could charge that his abandonment of Mr. Yeltsin at the crucial hour was the reason for the end of Russian reforms.

Evidence would suggest, however, that the West's ability to influence Russian voters is marginal at best; you have only to look at the overwhelming western support for Mikhail Gorbachev to understand that it can also rebound. There may even be a question-mark over the true strength of the Russians' much-publicised sympathy for the Serbs as brother Slavs.

But what is especially depressing about the new moves by Moscow and Washington is the possibility of a return to a situation that everyone thought had been left behind: the Russian veto at the Security Council.

Lacking a clear-cut policy on Bosnia, the United States has been playing its Russia card at the expense of efforts by others, not least by Messrs Vance and Owen, to bring peace to Bosnia.

The latest delay in adopting tougher sanctions against the Serbs was in fact the third in a row. The first came immediately after Mr. Vance and Lord Owen had managed, against great odds, to persuade the Bosnian Muslims to join the Croats in accepting their plan to divide the country into semi-autonomous regions. The move isolated the Serbs and prepared them for a new round of sanctions designed to persuade them to sign the plan, too. But because of Washington's procrastination, the Security Council missed a chance to impose the new sanctions before the Serbian

parliament rejected the peace plan.

The U.S. administration, always half-hearted on the Vance-Owen plan, felt it could only "commend" and not endorse it in the new sanctions resolution. This also wasted precious time.

Then came the Vancouver summit, and Washington again delayed the sanctions vote, warning its allies that Mr. Yeltsin would be embarrassed by such a move on the eve of the meeting. Now there is Mr. Yeltsin's referendum.

In each of the delays, the U.S. persuaded its reluctant allies, Britain, France and Spain, to follow suit. Normally composed ambassadors of those countries were huffing and puffing in the corridors, enraged that in attending to the needs of the new U.S.-Russia relationship, Washington had rendered the Security Council inactive. The Serbs, understandably, felt invulnerable and broke a two-week ceasefire.

No wonder the non-aligned members of the Security Council rebelled. Cape Verde, Djibouti, Morocco, Pakistan and Venezuela complained that the council was being held hostage to Russia's internal political problems. If the Russians wanted to side with the Serbs they should go ahead and do so openly, the non-aligned states argued, otherwise the international community was only displaying its paralysis in efforts to help those suffering in Bosnia. What all members of the council had been feeling was that the delays also served to cover up

Washington's inability to make up its mind about what to do in Bosnia.

At this point, in the peace efforts it seems that diplomacy may have run its course. If, as expected, the Russian diplomatic shuttle fails, there can be no certainty that Moscow will come back after April 25 and support the Vance-Owen plan. Washington is not even prepared to provide an incentive by linking financial aid to the return of the era of the Soviet veto at the U.N. is now a possibility.

The prospects for the people of Bosnia are grim. Britain and France will not keep troops there without a U.N. mandate, and Security Council members have not begun to consider any alternatives — such as a U.N. transitional authority like the one in place in Cambodia.

Other than allowing the factions to fight it out, that leaves the U.S. with the possibility of unilateral military action, as in Somalia. But General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs on Staff, refuses to entertain such a policy: it is a quagmire not fit for U.S. troops, he says. The Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, says Bosnia is "a centuries-old problem that comes from hell. The United States simply does not have the means to make people in that region of the world like each other." With the new Russian-American agenda guiding the international community on Balkan policy, there will be no peace soon, it seems — The Independent.

Weekly Political Pulse

Thatcher's lonely cry — OIC take heed

By Waleed Sadi

Three cheers to former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who, a few days ago, emotionally depicted the West's ineffective action against the atrocities in Bosnia as tantamount to being an accomplice to the massacres that have been committed in that country for over a year already. Mrs. Thatcher is no novice when it comes to assessing situations and conflicts and is accusing the western world of effectively aiding and abetting the crimes against humanity that the Serbs have been conducting against the Bosnian Muslims with impunity. The former prime minister is known for making her strong views loud and clear and she does so driven by a unique moral trait that once characterised the western civilisation.

After watching the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Bosnian Muslims and the systematic rape of their girls and women, she could wait no longer and raised her voice in anger against the world leaders who still sit idly by in the face of the carnage. She is not alone in this. The world is waking up to the horror of the Bosnian genocide and the need for a strong international response.

The Muslim World, or rather what is left of it, should extend to Mrs. Thatcher all forms of appreciation publicly and privately. Better still, all mankind truly concerned about human rights and humanitarian laws should extend to the former "iron lady" full recognition and gratitude. At least Baroness Thatcher has spoken up against the terrible wrongs that are still being perpetrated in Bosnia in a tone of voice that reflects deep anguish and concern, something which cannot be said about the majority of the Arab and Muslim leaders. Come to think of it, it is shocking how the Arab and Muslim worlds have dealt with the Serbian atrocities and one wonders if there really are entities called the Arab worlds.

His Majesty King Hussein's recent appeal to the Arab and Muslim heads of state to do something tangible to end the suffering of the Bosnian Muslims must have fallen on deaf ears since both the Arab and Muslim people have become numb and immune to the urgent and persistent appeals of the Bosnian Muslims for help and rescue from imminent disasters. Obviously there is a deep crisis in Islam as bad as the one in the Arab countries.

There is no doubt that the Arabs' and Muslims' inaction to counter the Serbs' grave violations would trigger some kind of a reaction in the long run, at least, that may still cleanse the two worlds. One would have thought that King Fahd of Saudi Arabia would be at the forefront of the Arab and Islamic leaders in calling for a swift and effective end to the slaughter of the Muslims in Bosnia and the punishment of all those responsible for committing them. The Bosnian situation would have been the ideal time for the use of the oil weapon against the enemies of Islam. But the Arab and Muslim world has failed to do so. Instead, they have been looking up to Russia for leadership in an international reaction to the long massacres in former Yugoslavia. Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf states have the economic and political clout to at least raise their voices the way Mrs. Thatcher has done, not once but repeatedly over the course of the past year. Had the Arab and Muslim worlds acted effectively and in concert over the plight of the Bosnian Muslims, the hands of U.S. President Bill Clinton would have been strengthened in the face of the opposition he has encountered from London and Paris to more forceful action against Serbia. President Clinton started out just as passionate and emotional about the Bosnian situation as Mrs. Thatcher but somehow he lost his nerve and resolve in the pursuit of his declared policy on former Yugoslavia. But President

Clinton cannot be expected to do more than the Islamic and Arab heads of state who must have struck him as aloof and practically indifferent to the barbaric actions of the Serbs. Given the silence of the Arab and Muslim worlds, the field was left wide open to Russia, the faithful ally of the Serbs, to manipulate the actions and inactions of the United Nations Security Council. One would have thought that the Arab and Muslim countries would rise in arms against Moscow for its record on the Bosnian situation. At least the Arab and Muslim countries should react to Moscow's belligerent policy towards the defenceless Bosnian Muslims by declaring an economic and political boycott against that country.

It is not too late to formulate such a posture here and now first against Moscow and then against all other capitals that have lent support to the Serbian atrocities. The Organisation of the Islamic Conference should convene an urgent summit for this specific purpose as soon as possible, if it hopes to salvage its credibility. What Mrs. Thatcher has been calling for is simply the use of western air power to knock out Serbian forces that are besieging Muslim towns and enclaves are also in urgent need of similar defence. Mrs. Thatcher is also calling for lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims since it is utterly senseless to treat equally the aggressor and the aggressed. All that the Bosnian Muslims have been pleading for is an opportunity to defend themselves. How can the western world deny them even this right?

Mrs. Thatcher raised her voice once again. It is up to the prime minister left off by beginning to apply effective pressure on the western governments in a bid to neutralise the indirect Russian aggression on the Islamic community in Bosnia.

Peace talks said set for April 27

(Continued from page 1)

peace talks was reaching a final climax.

Mr. Arafat arrived from Egypt, whose foreign minister Amr Musa said the Arabs were considering a proposal to postpone the start of the talks in Washington.

Mr. Hussein said the delay was necessary to clarify promises by the United States and Israel.

In Warsaw, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin criticised the Arabs for delaying the negotiations.

"Now the world knows who is really interested in peace," said Mr. Rabin, asked to comment on the delay sought by the Palestinians and Arab states.

In Amman a PLO hardliner said Monday that Mr. Arafat had already decided to let Palestinians attend the peace talks.

PLO Executive Committee member Tayseer Khaled, who opposes the peace process, said Mr. Arafat had taken the decision without consulting the PLO's Executive Committee.

"The decision to let Palestinians attend the next round of talks has been ready since yesterday," Mr. Khaled told Reuters.

Mr. Khaled is a member of Nafay Hawameh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which opposes the peace process.

"Nobody in the Palestinian leadership has the right to bypass the PLO's Executive Committee and turn their back to the will of the Palestinian people who oppose the path of this process and its unfair terms," he said.

In Washington, Secretary of State Christopher acknowledged Monday that the peace talks would not resume on schedule, but he said he anticipated a "relatively minor delay" of not more than a week.

He urged the Arab officials meeting in Damascus to approve resumption of the negotiations with Israel. He reiterated that the United States would take on a "full partnership" role.

While Mr. Christopher and other U.S. officials have not spelled out what that means, the implication is that he or top aides would step into the talks and help frame a settlement that has eluded the two sides since negotiations began in October 1991.

The prospect of more energetic U.S. involvement under President Bill Clinton raised interest in the round that was due to open at the State Department Tuesday. Israel had accepted a joint invitation from the co-sponsors, the United States and Russia.

"I hope that the meeting today in Damascus will produce a favourable result," Mr. Christopher said. "One thing I would want to stress is the importance to all the parties of returning to the table, taking advantage of the full partnership of the United States."

He told reporters during a picture-taking session in his office with Petr Kravchanka, the foreign minister of Belarus, that he was "slightly disappointed" by the delay.

"But I continue to feel quite confident," he said, "that the discussions will resume here in the relatively near future. I would hope a delay of not more than one week."

U.S. and other efforts to kick-start the negotiations faltered when the Palestinians demanded Israel first reopen the occupied territories and resolve the expulsion crisis.

The four Arab parties to the peace negotiations, who resumed talks here Friday and Saturday, want Washington to give written answers to these and other concerns, Arab officials said.

Jamal Al Surani, a PLO Executive Committee member, said in Cairo that the United States must provide "written confirmation of the basic principles of the negotiations, particularly U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338."

Iraq says U.S. ignored overtures

(Continued from page 1)

Department said one of two Wild Wessel fighters fired missile at a radar tracking site south of the "no-fly" zone in northern Iraq after radar targeted it. The site was destroyed, it said.

A spokesman in Stuttgart, Germany, for the U.S. forces in Europe said it was the first such attack by a U.S. air patrol south of the zone set up to protect the Kurds from attack by Baghdad.

Reporting from Mosul, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said the anti-aircraft position was more than 22 kilometres south of the exclusion zone.

Neither of the U.S. planes was fired on but the crew felt threatened when the radar illuminated them, according to Pentagon spokesman lieutenant Commander Brian Cullin.

"They operated under the guidelines that when you're illuminated it is considered to be a threat," he said.

"This new aggression comes as civil defence workers in the Nineveh government continue to defuse the fragmentation bombs dropped by U.S. planes on the (April 9)," INA said.

It gave no further details on Sunday's attack. On Friday, it said an eight-year-old boy was killed when a cluster bomb exploded.

White House spokesman Lorraine Voles said the attack with anti-radar missiles was "consistent with our policy that when our forces feel threatened, we're going to respond."

The ouster of Mr. Sharif shows that Pakistan's fragile democracy remains under the shadow of the army despite its loss of direct power in 1988, analysts said.

President Ishaq Khan, while sacking Mr. Sharif Sunday, also cited what he called his "undue interference" in the affairs of the half a million-strong army.

This interference, he said, created "serious tension" between the civilian government and the military's general headquarters during the tenure of late army chief General Asif Nawaz who died in January.

Mr. Ishaq Khan said Mr. Sharif "furiously" resented his appointment of Gen. Asif and displayed the same "anger and resentment" after Gen. Abdul Waheed was named as successor.

He also mentioned "serious allegations" Mr. Asif's widow of "high-handed treatment meted out to her husband."

A week before Mr. Sharif's dismissal Nuzhat Nawaz had publicly charged that the general had been "poisoned."

Bitter power struggle in Pakistan

(Continued from page 1)

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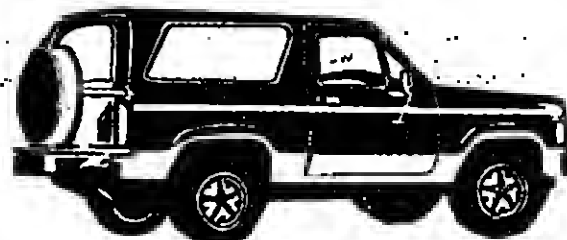
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Miller wins 3 titles, despite illness

Miller needed to beat the 9.737 scored by Romania's Gina Gogean to capture the gold. She scored 9.787.

The other women's gold medal went to Yelena Piskoun of Belarus in the vault competition.

Another Belarusian, Vitali Scherbo, did not match his six-time performance from the Olympics, but wound up with three golds, adding the vault and the parallel bars titles to his all-around gold.

Pae Gil Su of North Korea won the men'sommel bar, his specialty, and Yuri Chechi triumphed on the rings to win Italy's first world championships gold.

Sergei Charkov of Russia, who placed second in the all-around final, won the high bar competition, and Grigori Musiatin of Ukraine won gold on the floor.

Hakeem Olajuwon leads the Rockets

Playing 46 minutes, the NBA's leading shot blocker had eight blocks in an 86-81 victory that gave Houston a nine-game winning streak and a franchise-record 53 wins with four regular-season games left.

Despite being double and triple-teamed by the Sonics, Olajuwon also led the Rockets with 21 points and 11 rebounds.

Charles Barkley of Phoenix appears to be the leading MVP candidate, but don't overlook the 30-year-old Olajuwon.

Olajuwon is fifth in the NBA in scoring with a career-best 25.9 points per game and third in



in the impossible

With six matches left, most of

Q.6—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AQ3 ♥7 ♦AQ95 ♣J1086
 The bidding has proceeded:

North	East	South	West
1 ♠	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♠	Pass		

What do you bid now?
 A—If it were merely a question of which game you want to play, a strong argument could be made for a bid of three no trump. However, your hand has distinct slam possibilities, and we suggest you alert partner by jumping to four clubs.

22) Look into the various schools of thought that appeals to you and means for granting the need you can utilise this day to the best advantage.

"Today at work the copy machine made a really weird noise and it made me think of you."

Answer: "○○○"○○○○-○○○○"
(Answers tomorrow)

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	39 Rocker Adam		56 Car
	44 Top		

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Hani buried as gunfire erupts; Mandela blasts government

GERMISTON, South Africa (Agencies) — Slain black leader Chris Hani was lowered into his grave here Monday as gunfire erupted around the South Park Cemetery near Johannesburg.

The firing was started by a uniformed member of the African National Congress (ANC) army, Umkhonto We Sizwe, who fired four pistol shots into the air. The shooting continued with automatic rifle fire being identified as the coffin was lowered.

After Mr. Hani's body was buried, ANC official Tokyo Sexwale appealed for people in the crowd to cease shooting. "We are issuing an order for people to cease firing," Mr. Sexwale said.

Mr. Hani, assassinated 10 days ago in his home in Boksburg near Johannesburg, was laid to rest as the crowd of several thousand sang a song of tribute.

ANC President Nelson Mandela threw a single red carnation and sand into the grave, as did several other leading figures of the movement as they filed past.

Earlier Monday, Mr. Mandela bitterly accused the Pretoria gov-

ernment of protecting the extreme right as he addressed 100,000 mourners who turned out Monday to bury Mr. Hani.

In a speech at a packed soccer stadium, Mr. Mandela railed at President F.W. de Klerk for granting a broad amnesty to South Africans accused of political crimes, including members of the security forces, through controversial legislation last October.

A member of the neo-fascist Afrikaner Resistance Movement, Janusz Walus, has been charged with gunning down Mr. Hani and Clive Derby-Lewis, the top English-speaker in the mainstream Afrikaans Conservative Party was arrested in connection with the case Saturday.

While radicals denounced by the ANC as agents provocateurs traded automatic weapons fire with police outside the stadium, Mr. Mandela lambasted the amnesty.

"It granted a licence to kill the man who wished to plunge this country into a racial war," he said.

"Through this legislation they were told that they could murder without fear of punishment."

And he warned: "We do not recognise such indemnity. We will not accept that a murder can be committed and the assassin can plead political indemnity."

"The criminals are investigating themselves," he said. When the ANC had first spoken of a third force behind the wave of killing that hit the Johannesburg area in July 1990 it was ridiculed, he recalled, using the ANC term for covert agents working to derail the peace process through political assassinations.

"Now both South Africa and the world has recognised not only the existence of that same third force but also the extent of its activities."

"That is why De Klerk retired army and police force generals with golden handshakes, but neither we nor the country know what activities they were dismissed for."

He slammed Mr. De Klerk for reacting to Mr. Hani's death by summoning the State Security Council to see how best black anger could be controlled.

"Why deploy troops against the mourners," he asked. "They say we cannot control our forces. We are not cattle to be controlled."

And he said: "We the victims of violence have been blamed by you for the very acts that take our lives, yet you treat the far right with kid gloves."

"Black lives are cheap and will remain so as long as apartheid continues to exist. For the ordinary black people of this country, apartheid is alive and well," he said.

But he was careful to link the anger to the campaign of mass action the ANC announced Friday to put pressure on democracy negotiators to come up with a date for a non-racial election by the end of May.

"This government is illegitimate, unrepresentative and unfit to govern," he said. "We want

the installation of a Transitional Executive Council with one purpose and one purpose alone: To ensure that free and fair elections are held in the shortest possible time."

Meanwhile angry black youths vowed vengeance for the massacre of 19 people in Johannesburg's Sebokeng township, saying they knew who was responsible but the police would not act.

"These are political thugs. We know who they are but the problem is even if we can tell the police where they are they will never be arrested," a township youth said.

"It is the duty of the youths to take the law into our own hands."

Police said they did not know the motive for the massacre and offered a 250,000 rand (\$80,000) reward for information leading to the arrest of the killers.

The massacre began when the gunmen knocked on the door of a township house, demanded keys to a car parked outside and after being given them, shot dead the car-owner and his wife.

For the next three hours they opened fire at random from the car in nine other sections of the township, leaving a trail of dead and wounded in their wake, police and witnesses said.

"Whoever they found they shot," said a youth, one of several angry young men who vowed the massacre would be avenged.

Addressing the 80,000 people gathered to mourn Mr. Hani at the stadium, Mr. Mandela questioned why the police were so slow to react to the massacre.

"Where were the police when... gunmen rampaged through Sebokeng last night," he asked.

One man was shot 12 times after recognising the killers and demanding to know what they were doing, witnesses said.



Members of Umkhonto-We Sizwe, the ANC military wing, carry the coffin of the assassinated South African Communist Party leader Chris Hani, at the vigil near Soweto (AFP photo)

Srebrenica officials block evacuation

SARAJEVO (R) — Authorities in Srebrenica refused to allow civilians to be evacuated from the Muslim town Monday and the commander of its Bosnian Serb besiegers said his troops would not withdraw under a ceasefire.

As the moves cast a shadow over efforts to ease the plight of thousands of refugees in the east Bosnian town, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev called for a high-level meeting of the Security Council on the Yugoslav conflict and suggested foreign ministers could hold it in Srebrenica or Sarajevo.

Encouraged by the success of U.N. helicopters which ferried 133 badly wounded or sick people from Srebrenica Sunday under a ceasefire plan agreed by military commanders, the U.N. refugee agency sent a 19-truck convoy towards the town.

But 10 of the lorries — lightly loaded to leave room for some of the 30,000 refugees trapped in Srebrenica by the year-old Serb siege — had to turn back empty. The nine trucks carrying food still awaited Serb clearance to move in.

"We have received confirmation that the Bosnian authorities in Srebrenica will not permit any evacuation," a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokeswoman in Belgrade said.

UNHCR spokesman Peter Kessler told reporters in Sarajevo the authorities were demanding that 157 seriously wounded people — many of them amputees in desperate need of surgery — should be taken out by helicopter before the others could start leaving.

The ceasefire took effect early Sunday morning. It seemed to be holding as 140 Canadian peacekeeping soldiers prepared to start dismantling Srebrenica's Muslim defenses as agreed in the U.N.-brokered truce.

"We are pleased to note that the ceasefire was respected absolutely yesterday," said Urs Boegli, the International Committee of the Red Cross coordinator in former Yugoslavia.

General Philippe Morillon, commander of U.N. peacekeeping forces in Bosnia, said Sunday night that the besieging troops would withdraw as soon as Srebrenica was demilitarised.

But the Bosnian Serbs' military commander, General Ratko Mladic, denied he had agreed to a withdrawal.

The Bosnian Serb News Agency (SRNA) quoted him as saying: "The agreement says that combat operations are frozen at current lines around Srebrenica, and I assumed the attitude that nobody is allowed to violate the agreement."

A three-week-old ceasefire across the rest of Bosnia deteriorated further. The focus of the violence remained central Bosnia, where Muslim and Croat forces have fought pitched battles that have killed scores of people since Friday.

(HINA) reported that a Muslim artillery attack killed six soldiers and a number of civilians in the town of Kiseljak in central Bosnia. Croatian radio said Muslims detonated a car bomb in Vitez that killed many civilians but this could not be independently confirmed.

The government army accused Bosnian Croat authorities of trying to destroy Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state.

In Moscow, Interfax News Agency quoted Mr. Kozyrev as saying an alternative to a meeting of the Security Council foreign ministers would be to reconvene the London conference which launched the Yugoslav peace process last year.

Mr. Kozyrev said outside military intervention in the war was not on the agenda — "there is no point in creating illusions."

The Bosnian Serbs showed no sign of easing their refusal to accept the international peace plan which would turn Bosnia into virtually autonomous provinces along ethnic lines.

If they do not agree to the plan by April 26, new sanctions approved by the Security Council will take effect against Serbian-led Yugoslavia, which is thought to have influence over the Bosnian Serbs.

Peace envoy Lord Owen said he hoped the sanctions would stop the fighting but urged governments to consider intervention.

"At the moment the Serbs are still taking territory and they are not being checked," he said. "So it's up to the governments of the world... Are they going to be rolled over by the Serbs?"

Another peacekeeper killed in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH (R) — A Bulgarian soldier serving with U.N. peacekeeping forces in Cambodia was killed and two were injured Monday when a grenade hit their vehicle as they rushed to relieve a village under Khmer Rouge attack.

The extent of the "yes" vote as suggested by the Doka Research Group exit poll exceeded even the most daring of forecasts by the referendum's backers, who had been looking for a minimum 60 per cent.

tank grenade when it entered the village of New Orail in Kompong Spoe province 35 kilometres from Phnom Penh, a spokesman for the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) told reporters.

One hundred and fifty Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacked the village in Samrong Tong district for two hours Monday morning with mortars, automatic weapons and B-40 rockets, spokesman Eric Falt said.

He said the Khmer Rouge was apparently trying to attack government forces in the village.

But because the village contained a U.N. district headquarters staffed by five UNTAC workers, a commander in the provincial capital sent two armoured personnel carriers to relieve it.

"Upon reaching the village one of the armoured personnel carriers (APC) was hit by an anti-tank grenade," Mr. Falt said.

King case officer says he received a fair trial

LOS ANGELES (Agencies) — The police sergeant convicted in the Rodney King civil rights case said on television that he had received a fair trial.

"The system works," Sergeant Stacey Koon said Sunday night as fears of violence in Los Angeles abated after the trial and National Guard troops were ordered to stand down.

The troops were deployed a week ago in case of a repeat of the rioting that broke out last April when Sgt. Koon and three other white policemen were acquitted in a state court over the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King.

A second trial — this time in a federal court — resulted in Sgt. Koon and one officer being convicted Saturday and two others acquitted on civil rights charges stemming from Mr. King's 1992 arrest.

The sergeant and Laurence Powell, who delivered the most baton blows, face up to 10 years in prison and \$250,000 each in fines.

Sgt. Koon, the most senior of the four officers, was the first to speak to the media.

He said on the television show that he had received nothing less than a fair trial.

"I'm not here to badmouth the system. I'm not here to badmouth the jurors," he said.

But, alluding to the earlier acquittals sparking bloody rioting, Sgt. Koon added: "The jurors in this particular case were under a tremendous amount of stress. This was a very high-profile case."

The tool from last year's violence was 33 dead and nearly \$1 billion in damage.

grandson of immigrants from China, has been consistently ahead in the polls, but his lead has dwindled as multi-millionaire Richard Riordan invested a large chunk of his fortune in the race.

The prize they are seeking is no sinecure — getting Los Angeles back on its feet socially and economically after two years during which the King case hung over the city like a dark cloud.

Politically, Mr. Woo and Mr. Riordan are poles apart.

Mr. Woo makes no objections to being described as an ideological liberal who believes the government has a responsibility to intervene on behalf of the poor.

He looks to unite the city's ethnic factions, notably Asian, black and Hispanic in much the same fashion as outgoing Mayor Tom Bradley, who has been on the job for 10 years.

Mr. Woo has been a frequent visitor to those ethnic neighbourhoods in south central Los Angeles which bore the brunt of last year's rioting after the acquittal in the first King beating trial.

And he led a campaign that led to the resignation of the combative chief of the Los Angeles Police, Darryl Gates.

Mr. Woo made it clear after the new King verdict issued Saturday where his affinities lay.

"The verdict didn't produce any jobs... That is the unfinished business ahead of us," Mr. Woo told a gathering of blacks. "We need to continue the movement for change and reform and to close the gap between the haves and have-nots."

His opponents counter that Mr. Woo is big on ideas but lost when it comes to applying them. The best example of this, they say, is the increasingly rundown

state of his district in Hollywood, long the West Coast symbol of glitz and glamour.

According to one disgruntled resident writing to the Los Angeles Times, the famous suburb has been in steady decline over the last four years.

Gang members selling crack on every corner, prostitutes and vagrants everywhere, garbage and graffiti littering the streets. Would you live here Mr. Woo? I think not.

That is where Mr. Riordan comes in with his strong right-wing emphasis on law and order coupled with strong faith in the entrepreneurial spirit and the free market system.

Mr. Riordan has the backing of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan and several members of the Republican Party establishment have spoken on his behalf.

That, coupled with the \$3 million of his own money he has spent Perot-style on the campaign has seen him emerge from the pack as the standard bearer of the conservatives.

But observers here said that Mr. Riordan would suffer most from the peaceful reaction to the verdict in the second King trial and the calls for ethnic harmony which accompanied it.

A total of 24 candidates are running in the first round of voting which will lead to a run-off on June 8 between the leading two if no one gets an outright majority.

A runoff seems likely, with the latest poll giving Mr. Woo and Mr. Riordan just 13 per cent and 10 per cent of the vote respectively. No one else was able to get more than three per cent as voter disaffection remained high.

COLUMN

Irkutsk acts to safeguard morals

MOSCOW (AFP) — The legislative council for the Siberian region of Irkutsk has begun open hearings to discuss ways of upholding public morals and combating the "propaganda of violence and cruelty." ITAR-TASS said Monday. The hearings were being attended by teachers, law enforcement officials and intellectuals and were organised by a special commission set up under the Irkutsk Council for Culture, Spiritual and Moral Perfection of Society. Last year the commission called for the banning of black magic, sorcerers and so-called miracle workers on the territory of the Irkutsk region. ITAR-TASS said. An initiative from the commission also led to the banning of a number of films, including Empire Of Ice and Caligula from local cinemas and to the creation of the first "moral police squad" in Russia, the report said. Authorities in various parts of the Russian Far East publicly denied rumours last year that the world was ending soon, accusing foreign missionaries and occult practitioners of seeking to spread panic in society with the assertion.

Official urges Japanese to have at least 3 children

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese should have at least three children to preserve the "competitive spirit" needed in a market economy, the secretary-general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was quoted Monday as saying. "You don't need to have as many as ten, but three to five," Seiichiro Kajiyama was quoted as saying at an LDP seminar on women in Atami, southwest of here. Mr. Kajiyama, himself the youngest in a family of 10 children, said large families fostered a spirit of competition among children, particularly at meal times when they fight over food, newspapers reported. The Japanese birth rate has been falling for some time, and stood at 2.9 per thousand last year, too low according to the government.

Japanese say gangsters are a necessary evil

TOKYO (R) — Nearly one in four young Japanese men believes that hiring gangsters to settle disputes is a necessary evil, according to a survey published in newspapers Monday. About 23 per cent of men and 17 per cent of women in their 20s said that relying on gangsters to extort money or force out-of-court settlements with the use or threat of violence was "bad but cannot be helped" or else "not bad." The survey showed. The survey, conducted by the prime minister's office, canvassed 3,000 people nationwide about organised crime. About one in four young men approved of paying gangsters extortion money if they asked for it and about the same number said they would hesitate to cooperate as a witness if they saw a gang member commit a crime or suspicious act. Asked why some Japanese had recourse to organised crime to settle their grievances, about four in 10 said that the courts took too long or that going to the police was too troublesome. The poll comes a year after the enactment of legal curbs on the activities of Japan's "yakuza" gangsters. Before the anti-organised crime law came into effect in March 1992, police lacked power to rein in gangsters without evidence that they had used violence to intimidate victims.

Marcos' son weds in Italy, Imelda not invited

MANILA (AP) — The late president Ferdinand Marcos' only son married his Filipino fiancée in Italy this weekend, his staff announced Monday. Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., 35, a member of the Philippine House of Representatives, married Louise Araneta Saturday at the Chapel of St. Francis in Fiesole, Italy, his staff said. But Imelda Marcos, his mother, said she wasn't invited and was shocked at the news which came out in two nationally-circulated newspapers Monday. "I was surely surprised at the news item," Mrs. Marcos said in a statement. "In the case of Bong-Bong's wedding, as his mother, I will pray for the best." The groom's two sisters, Imee and Irene, attended the wedding, family sources said. Mrs. Marcos is in Manila facing several civil and criminal suits filed by the government of Corason Aquino, who was installed as president following the February 1986 revolt that toppled Mr. Marcos.

China reportedly has 'nuclear city' in Tibet

WASHINGTON (AFP) — China uses a top-secret nuclear city in the Tibetan plateau as its primary research centre and has deployed nuclear missiles in at least three sites in the semi-autonomous province, according to a report released Monday.

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) also reported that the Chinese have plans to build a nuclear reactor in Lhasa, use forced prison labour at the nuclear sites and threaten regional stability with the missiles deployed in Tibet.

"China's positioning of nuclear and non-nuclear weapons on the Tibetan plateau has put many of India's major industrial and military facilities within striking distance of short-range missiles," said the report entitled Nuclear Tibet.

The Washington-based organisation formed in 1988 to monitor human rights in Tibet said its report was based on interviews with Chinese nuclear experts, government officials, two FTC fact-finding missions and Tibetans, who the group says are being poisoned by radiation.

The nuclear city was also "dumping an unknown quantity of radioactive nuclear waste" according to the group which said it had received "credible reports of illness and death to Tibetans near uranium mines."

Quoting the Tibet Information Network in London, ICT cited an example of a town near a mine in Ngaba province where 35 of the 500 residents have died from drinking water polluted by nuclear waste in the past three years.

"China's nuclear programme is only a fraction of the size of those in the United States and the ex-Soviet Union... But in areas of nuclear proliferation, lack of worker safety and irresponsible waste disposal, China's record is as poor or even worse than those of other nuclear powers," said the report.

The Chinese government denied Monday the existence of the top-secret nuclear research centre and nuclear weapons on the Tibetan plateau within striking distance of India.

The government's Nuclear Safety Administration also denied the death of 35 people near uranium mines cited in a report by ICT.

"This is impossible. I have never heard anything about this," an administration spokesman told AFP.

The Defence Ministry declined to comment on the report.

Court in Chechnya slaps Dudayev's decrees

MOSCOW (R) — The Constitutional Court in the rebel Russian region of Chechnya ruled Monday the president had violated the constitution by dissolving the legislature and imposing presidential rule. Interfax News Agency reported.

It was not immediately clear whether the ruling would have any effect on the power struggle between supporters and foes of President Dzhokhar Dudayev, a flamboyant former Soviet Air Force general.

Parliament moved Sunday to impeach Gen. Dudayev, accusing him of trying to carry out a coup with a series of decrees he issued the previous day, including a midnight-to-dawn curfew in the capital Grozny.

Interfax said supporters and opponents of Mr. Dudayev were planning to continue separate rallies in the city centre and quoted

opponents as saying they feared force might be used against them. So far the city has been reported calm.

Chechnya, one of the most volatile regions in the tinderbox northern Caucasus region, used to be part of a broader territory known as Chechno-Ingushetia before it broke away from Russia and declared independence 18 months ago.

But public discontent has been rising for months as living standards fall. Gen. Dudayev imposed the curfew after two days of demonstrations during which people called for his resignation.

Chechen leaders have said the territory will not take part in the April 25 referendum on power across the Russia Federation when voters will be invited to say if they support Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his reform policies.

Hanoi general denies writing POW report

HANOI (R) — U.S. envoy General John Vessey heard it from the horse's mouth Monday — Vietnamese ex-army General Tran Van Quang told him he did not write report on U.S. prisoners that has caused new friction with Hanoi.

"He gave us some important information... We're working hard," Gen. Vessey told reporters after an hour-long meeting with Gen. Quang in a chandelied room at Hanoi's army guest house.

Did Gen. Quang write the controversial 1972 report to the Communist Party politburo on the number of U.S. prisoners Hanoi then held? "He says not," Gen. Vessey replied.

"The guy writing that report was not Vietnamese at all," Gen. Quang, 76, told reporters, suggesting it may have been the Russian intelligence service, though he could not say why.

He did his best to convince Gen. Vessey — and the press — that he was not the author of the 1972 document which surfaced in a New York Times report last week.

The document said North Vietnam held 1,205 prisoners at a time when it said held 368 — implying Hanoi had hundreds more Americans behind bars than it was acknowledging.

A Russian translation of the purported document was found in Soviet Communist Party archives in Moscow, the New York Times said.

Gen. Quang told reporters after meeting Gen. Vessey that the document was a forgery and the figures of U.S. prisoners of war it gave were higher than the U.S. tally at the time.

He said he told the White House envoy: "The intelligence service which made this report was a very bad intelligence service."

Asked who was responsible, he said: "You can ask the Russian intelligence service or ask General Vessey."

He said he did not understand the reason for such a forgery.

"But I think it's a way to hinder advances in relations between Vietnam and the United States and cooperation in solving the MIA (missing in action) issue and that causes misunderstanding between two peoples who wish normal relations soon," he said.

It had also caused suffering to the families of Americans still listed as missing in action, Gen. Quang said.

U.S. President Bill Clinton asked Gen. Vessey to come to Hanoi to assess Vietnamese cooperation in U.S. efforts to account fully for more than 2,000 servicemen missing in Indochina from the Vietnam War, which ended in 1975.

On his visit may hinge a decision by Mr. Clinton on whether to lift Washington's economic embargo against Hanoi and establish relations, enabling U.S. firms to do business in one of Asia's most promising emerging economies.

When the New York Times story broke, investigating the report became Gen. Vessey's top priority.

Gen. Vessey was expected to indicate his verdict on the issue after meeting Vietnamese President Le Duc Anh. He returns to Washington later to report to Mr. Clinton.

Italians back reform by huge majority

ROME (R) — Italy's watershed referendum has been approved by a landslide, an exit poll reported Monday, with as many as 83 per cent of voters saying "yes" to sweeping electoral reform.

The poll, for RAI state television, was released minutes after voting ended in the two-day referendum, and is regarded by analysts as a reliable indication.

The extent of the "yes" vote as suggested by the Doka Research Group exit poll exceeded even the most daring of forecasts by the referendum's backers, who had been looking for a minimum 60 per cent.

King case officer says he received a fair trial

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